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Richard W. Askey, *President*
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March 12, 2020

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Room 225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg PA, 17120

The Honorable Pedro Rivera
Secretary of Education
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Tenth Floor, 333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126

Dear Governor Wolf and Secretary Rivera:

As we all prepare for the impact that COVID-19 coronavirus will have on our daily lives, I want to take this opportunity to remind you about the unique negative effects this pandemic will likely have on support professionals in Pennsylvania's public schools, and ask for your immediate and urgent assistance.

As we all know, it is likely, if not certain, that many public schools in the commonwealth will close, at least temporarily, to protect students and staff from the spread of this virus. While these precautions are certainly prudent, closing public schools will deny many support professionals, such as bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and maintenance employees, their paychecks. Many of these important school staff members are paid on an hourly basis. So, if they aren't working because of school closures, they won't be paid at all.

The impact this will have on these staff members and their families is clear and dramatic. Without pay, they will be hard pressed to support their families, care for their children, pay their rent, mortgages, and utilities, or buy groceries. It will also hurt local economies as they spend less in order to make ends meet.

I am asking you to do everything possible to prevent this. Specifically, I encourage you to contact all Pennsylvania public school entities and direct them to continue paying all staff members who are paid on an hourly basis even if their schools close due to COVID-19 coronavirus.

Pennsylvania is currently in a state of emergency due to this growing pandemic. Thanks to your leadership, Pennsylvania's response has been swift, strong, and well organized. However, in addition to the steps you have already taken, we need to ensure that hardworking Pennsylvanians have the basic resources to make ends meet during this crisis.

Ensuring that hourly paid school staff members, who are considered a key part of our public school system, continue to receive paychecks is absolutely essential. It is also the right thing to do.

Considering this, I urge you to contact all public school entities in the commonwealth and direct them to continue paying support professionals even if schools close because of this crisis.

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Thank you for your leadership and for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard W. Askey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Richard W. Askey
President